



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
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Ventura, CA 93009

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VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT CELEBRATES "NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH"

In celebration of "National Drug Court Month", the Ventura Superior Court will hold a Drug Court graduation and recognition ceremony on May 17, 2001, at 3:00 PM, in courtroom 22 of the Hall of Justice.

Graduation from the program marks the completion of a minimum 12 month program of comprehensive drug treatment, close supervision and full accountability. The Ventura County Drug Court program was established in April, 1995 with the creation of the Adult Drug Court. As a result of the success of the Adult Drug Court, the program was expanded to include Juvenile Drug Court and Dependency Drug Court.

The Ventura Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts hear cases of nonviolent offenders who show motivation for dealing with their substance abuse problem. They remove clients from the traditional criminal justice system, placing them in a new type of courtroom environment. Dependency Drug Court offers treatment to new mothers who are willing to work hard to be reunited with their children. All drug court participants undergo treatment and counseling, submit to frequent and random drug testing, make regular appearances before the judge and are monitored closely for program compliance. Graduated sanctions are imposed for noncompliance.

This year's "National Drug Court Month" marks 12 years of drug courts in the United States. From the first drug court in Miami in 1989, the movement emerged. In 1994, there were 12 courts; today, there are over 1,000 in operation or in the planning stages. The success of the drug court system is well documented. More than 70% of drug court participants have successfully completed the program or remain as active participants, and the cost of drug

court programs is significantly less than the cost of incarceration in the traditional court system.

Drug courts provide the focus and leadership for a community-wide, anti-drug response, bringing together criminal justice, treatment, education and other community partners in the fight against drug abuse and criminality. Drug courts do not let substance abusers evade responsibility, but hold them responsible for their actions while giving them the tools they need to rebuild their lives. The effort and focus required of drug court participants to graduate should not be underestimated. According to Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long, "The individuals graduating from the county drug court program have shown a concerted and personal commitment to their families and our community. Hopefully the skills learned in the drug court program will serve the participants well on their new journey that begins with graduation."

"National Drug Court Month" is coordinated on a national level by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), which was established in 1994 to assist the planning, implementation and operation of drug courts. NADCP is celebrating "National Drug Court Month" in New Orleans, LA, in conjunction with its 2001 NADCP 7th Annual Training Conference. Possibly the largest ever criminal justice conference emphasizing substance abuse issues, the conference is expected to draw over 3,000 drug court practitioners in the United States and across the world.

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